

REMARKS

Claims 6-16, 30, 32-41, 43, 44 and 48-59 are pending. Claims 6, 32 and 48 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 17-29, 31, 42 and 45-47 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 6, 32, 40, 43, 48 and 58 are the only independent claims.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of Claims 40, 41, 43, 44, 58 and 59 and the indication that Claims 6, 32 and 48 would be allowable if rewritten so as not to depend from a rejected claim, and with no change in scope. Since the latter claims have been so rewritten, they are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 4-7, 9-16 and 30 were rejected as being substantial duplicates of claims 18-29 and 42. The cancellation of the latter claims renders the rejection moot.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 17-19, 31 and 45-47 were rejected in view of various prior art. The above cancellations and the amendments rewriting allowable claims in independent form is believed to obviate the rejections.

In view of the above, all rejections have been overcome.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Dated: October 13, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By Joseph W. Ragusa  
Joseph W. Ragusa  
Registration No.: 38,586  
DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &  
OSHINSKY LLP  
1177 Avenue of the Americas  
41st Floor  
New York, New York 10036-2714  
(212) 835-1400  
Attorney for Applicant